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Office of Program Resources Management

(632) 552-9907

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### **NEWS HEADLINES**

#### **5 major int'l donors pledge support for Mindanao peace, development**

By Jessie R. Valdez

(Source: Philippine Information Agency News Online – 4/14/08)

Manila (14 April) -- The United States Agency for International Development (USAID), European Commission, Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Japan government and Philippines Country Director of World Bank and PDF Co-Chair, have pledged their continued support to peace and development initiatives in Mindanao.

The USAID will support the government's peace and development agenda by improving education in poorest affected areas in Mindanao; the European Commission committed to support health sector; AuSAID will work with parties in building the foundation for peace in Mindanao while Japan government will invest capital and technical assistance with the on-going review of the 1996 Peace Agreement.

During the recently concluded 2008 Philippines Development Forum, Bert Hofman Philippines Country Director of World Bank and PDF Co-Chair said that donors agreed to work through a unified strategy and mechanism for conflict-affected areas so that assistance will be used effectively during and after the peace process.

Other matters agreed upon during the forum include addressing and pursuing the negotiated peace settlement between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front; improving harmonization of Official Development

Assistance and alleviating poverty in the poorest regions as priority agenda for Mindanao. (PIA La Union)